

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 PM-03 ACDA-10 SAJ-01 PRS-01 L-02 IO-03

DRC-01 /067 W

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R 191502Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8784

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 16684

LIMDIS

VIENNA FOR MBFR DEL: GENEVA FOR CSCE DEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS; PFOR, MCAP, GW

SUBJECT: FRG CONCERN OVER "DETENTE EUPHORIA"

BEGIN SUMMARY. SPEECHES LAST WEEK BY DEFENSE MINISTER
LEBER, WARNING AGAINST OVERESTIMATING DETENTE AND
RECESSION IN WESTERN DEFENSE EFFORTS, FOLLOW A NUMBER
OF PRIVATE EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN MADE TO EMBOFF'S
BY SPD, FDP AND CDU PARLIAMENTARIANS. THESE BUNDESTAG
MEMBERS HAVE VOICED CONCERN OVER THE INTENSIFICATION
OF DETENTE EUPHORIA AT THE GRASS ROOTS, WHICH

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MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT TO GO DOWN THE LINE IN

SUPPORT OF DEFENSE SPENDING. THE DEPUTIES EMPHASIZED TO US THAT THEY HAVE HEARD SIMILAR EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN FROM PARLIAMENTARIANS IN OTHER WEST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. END SUMMARY

1. IN TWO MAJOR SPEECHES LAST WEEK, DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER HAS SOUGHT TO CAUTION THE GERMAN PUBLIC AGAINST UNDUE EXPECTATIONS FROM DETENTE AND TO HIGH LIGHT THE NEED FOR A CONTINUED EFFECTIVE DEFENSE POSTURE. AT MANNHEIM, LEBER ARGUED THAT THE MIDEAST CRISIS HAD PROVED THAT THE SOVIET THREAT TO WESTERN SECURITY HAD NOT DIMINISHED. TAKING UP THE SAME THEME NOV 15 AT BONN, LEBER WARNED AGAINST DEVELOPMENTS THAT WOULD LEAD TO A MILITARY VACUUM IN WESTERN EUROPE. HE SAID NEGLECT OF WEST EUROPEAN DEFENSE COULD MEAN THE END OF DETENTE POLICY. ACCORDING TO LEBER, THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS OF REDUCTION OF WARSAW PACT ARMAMENT. RATHER, THE USSR AND ITS ALLIES ARE CONTINUING TO BUILD UP THEIR MILITARY PREPAREDNESS. WARNING AGAINST EXCESSIVE OPTIMISM IN REGARD TO FUTURE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS, LEBER SAID THERE IS INSEPARABLE LINK BETWEEN DETENTE AND WESTERN DEFENSE READINESS; THE LATTER MUST NOT BE REDUCED UNILATERALLY.

2. WE UNDERSTAND THAT LEBER'S SPEECHES ARE A REACTION TO GERMAN CONCERN OVER GROWING DETENTE EUPHORIA, WHICH EMERGED RECENTLY AT SPD FRAKTION AND PRESIDUM MEETINGS AS WELL AS AT AN ALL DAY CABINET SEMINAR MEETING ON EUROPEAN AND ALLIANCE AFFAIRS. THE SPD MEETINGS, COMING IN THE MIDST OF ALLIED DISAGREEMENT OVER THE MIDEAST, INVOLVES LENGTHY DISCUSSIONS OF THE ADEQUACY OF AMERICAN CONSULTATIONS AND THE GROWTH OF U.S./SOVIET BILATERALISM. BUT WE ARE TOLD THAT THE SPD FRAKTION DISCUSSION CAME TO THE CLEAR CONCLUSION, WITHOUT DISSENT, THAT THE NATO ALLIANCE, THE ESSENTIAL CONTRIBU-

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TION OF THE U.S. AND THE MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT
OF WEST EUROPEAN DEFENSE FORCES MUST CONTINUE TO BE
THE FIRM BASIS OF WEST GERMAN SECURITY.

3. WHILE THE ABOVE CONCLUSION REPRESENTS THE CLEAR
VIEW OF THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT AND THE SPD FRAKTION,
OUR SOURCES SAID THE PICTURE IS "VERY DIFFERENT OUT IN
THE COUNTRYSIDE." ONE SENIOR SPD DEPUTY, "SPEAKING
AS THE PARTY BOSS OF AN ELECTION DISTRICT," SAID HE
AND HIS COLLEAGUES WERE TROUBLED BY THE WAXING DETENTE
EUPHORIA IN THE GRASS ROOTS THROUGHOUT GERMANY; THIS
DEPUTY SAID HIS COLLEAGUES IN OTHER WEST EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENTS HAD OBSERVED A SIMILAR "GROUND SWELL OF
POPULAR OPINION" THAT WAR IN EUROPE IS EXTREMELY
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UNLIKELY AND THAT MAINTENANCE OF CURRENT DEFENSE
EXPENDITURES IS THEREFORE UNWARRANTED. OUR SOURCES
ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THIS REPRESENTS A SOMBER PICTURE
AND EMPHASIZED THAT THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT AND SPD
FRAKTION ARE DETERMINED, TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT POLITICAL-
LY FEASIBLE, TO CONTINUE TO FOLLOW A POLICY COMMEN-
SURATE WITH ALLIED AND GERMAN NATIONAL INTERESTS. BUT
THEY CONCEDED, AS DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER HAS OFTEN TOLD
US, AND AS THE MINISTER REPEATED LAST WEEK IN HIS
MANNHEIM AND BONN SPEECHES, THAT THIS WILL BE
INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO DO IN VIEW OF POPULAR OPINION

IN EUROPE.
HILLENBRAND

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